

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, SCUL, UR
SUBJECT: ALIYEV REPORT ON NEW AZERBAIDZHAN CONSTITUTION
RESTORES AZERBAIDZHAN AS STATE LANGUAGE

REF: (A) MOSCOW 8326, (B) MOSCOW 8388

1. AZERBAIDZHAN FIRST SECRETARY ALIYEV'S SPEECH TO THE
AZERBAIDZHAN SUPREME SOVIET ON APRIL 20, AS PRINTED IN
BAKINSKIY RABOCHIY OF APRIL 21, INDICATES THAT AZERBAID-
ZHAN HAS JOINED GEORGIA AND ARMENIA IN AMENDING ITS DRAFT
CONSTITUTION TO SANCTION THE LANGUAGE OF THE
TITULAR NATIONALITY AS THE REPUBLIC'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE.

2. THE AZERBAIDZHAN DRAFT CONSTITUTION HAD MADE NO
MENTION OF THE AZERBAIDZHAN LANGUAGE. HOWEVER, THE FINAL
VERSION OF THE CONSTITUTION, AS DESCRIBED BY ALIYEV, STATES
THAT AZERBAIDZHAN IS THE STATE LANGUAGE OF THE REPUBLIC,
GUARANTEES STATE CONCERN FOR AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE
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DEVELOPMENT OF THE LANGUAGE, AND ENSURES ITS USE IN STATE
AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS, AS WELL AS IN EDUCATIONAL,
CULTURAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS. THE PERTINENT AMEND-
MENT, AS QUOTED BY ALIYEV IN HIS SPEECH, ALSO PROVIDES FOR
THE FREE USE IN THESE INSTITUTIONS OF RUSSIAN AND OTHER
LANGUAGES USED BY THE POPULATION, AND STIPULATES THAT NO
LIMITATION ON THE USE OF ANY OF THESE LANGUAGES IS

PERMITTED.

3. THIS WORDING IS VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL TO THE LANGUAGE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW GEORGIAN AND ARMENIAN CONSTITUTIONS. THE DRAFT CONSTITUTIONS OF ALL THREE TRANSCAUCASIAN REPUBLICS HAD DROPPED THE PROVISIONS FROM THEIR 1936-37 CONSTITUTIONS RECOGNIZING THE NATIVE LANGUAGE AS THE STATE LANGUAGE. IN ALL THREE CASES SUCH RECOGNITION HAS NOW BEEN RESTORED. THE TRANSCAUCASIAN REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONS THUS REMAIN THE ONLY ONES WE HAVE SEEN TO DATE WHICH ACCORD SPECIAL STATUS TO THEIR NATIVE TONGUES. SINCE THE EARLIER CONSTITUTIONS OF THE OTHER REPUBLICS DID NOT ACCORD SUCH SPECIAL STATUS TO THE NATIVE LANGUAGES, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT IT TO BE ACCORDED IN THE NEW DOCUMENTS. TOON

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